

INFORMATION REPORT

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CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY Austria

SUBJECT Present Status of the Communist Party of Austria (KPOe)

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. Although the KPOe is undoubtedly overemphasizing the importance of the results of the recent election of shop councilors, the elections deserve some recognition as an indication of the moderate success of the KPOe Betriebsorganisationen among factory workers. However, the claim of the KPOe that the number of Left Block and Unity List shop stewards in USIA factories and generally throughout the Soviet Zone has been substantially increased is definitely an exaggeration. The slight gain can be attributed more to the deteriorating economic situation in Austria than to any increase in strength by the KPOe.
2. The recent evidences of corruption in official positions have tended to heighten the mistrust of the present government which exists among the lower and middle classes. This dissatisfaction has led in no small measure to additional votes for Communist and Left Block candidates, and is more instrumental in strengthening the Communist position than the propaganda which is constantly directed toward the Austrian people.
3. The reorganization of the KPOe in Vienna resulted in an increase of KPOe sections from 235 to 903. The factory organizations of the KPOe at the present time number around 400.
4. "Peace Councils" (Friedensraete) are being set up in all factories. Members of the KPOe in factories have been instructed by the Central Committee to propagandize the Austrian Peace Movement (Oesterreichische Friedensbewegung) among workers in order to bring about the collective enrollment of entire factories in the movement.

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